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STATE FOR NEA/ARN, NEA/PA, NEA/AIA, INR/NESA, R/MR, I/GNEA, B/BXN,
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON GAZA INCURSION

Editorial Commentary

-- ""How I envy you, Shalit"

Columnist Jawad Bashiti writes on the op-ed page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (06/28): "This time, Palestinian 'terrorists' undertook a military action that made it difficult even for Israel and the United States describe it as a terrorist action. This heroic Palestinian military action ... represents 100% legitimate Palestinian military resistance, and even those who look for 'terrorism' under the microscope will not dare list it as terrorism. In other words, the operation was categorically and decisively above all suspicions.... Israel and the United States in particular are at a loss. Both have shown inability to find a name or description for this action.... Nevertheless, it was decided that this action will be treated as a 'crime', albeit not terrorist, committed by Palestinian terrorists against Israel and its army. As for the famous soldier, Gelad Shalit, he is being described as 'kidnapped' and not as a 'prisoner'. Israeli soldiers who fall into the hands of Palestinian fighters during battle are 'kidnapped' and not 'prisoners', and Palestinians who are in Israeli prisons are 'terrorists' and not 'prisoners of war'! Disaster is at hand. Everything in terms of crimes against Palestinian children on the beaches and the streets that Israel committed before this is now forgotten.... Shalit is not the only prisoner. His captivators are also prisoners. The immediate and unconditional release of Shalit is something that the Palestinians must avoid. We do support his release in return for the release of some of the Palestinian prisoners, and if the Olmert government rejects such a trade-off, then let the agreement be that Shalit is released in return for a comprehensive and mutual halt of military actions."

-- "One Israeli is equal to ten thousands Palestinians!"

Columnist Oraib Rantawi writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (06/28): "Israel keeps ten thousand Palestinian prisoners in its prisons, including women and children under 18 ... some being held without trial and many others held during mass arrests. And yet, now one moves or says anything. One soldier captured in a one hundred percent clean-cut military operation sends the entire world up in arms and brings condemnations and denunciations crashing down upon the heads of Palestinians.... Since the capture of the Israeli soldier, Israel has launched the ugliest form of attacks and arrest in the various Palestinian areas, sending tens of Palestinian citizens and activists to prison. Not one paid any attention to these 'numbers'. After all, the

Palestinian is just a number or a member of the pack. It does not matter if he is killed, arrested and rendered homeless. It does not matter if his land is taken, if his home is destroyed or if his fields are burned. The Palestinian, from the viewpoint of the lords of Tel Aviv and its masters, is only a target for bullets and rockets and bombs.... Israel lies, and so do we, if we talk about the link between the imminent aggression on Gaza and the continued capture of the Israeli soldier. This is because the aggression has already been decided and set.... Israel lies when it claims that everything it is doing is in defense of its people. Israel's war against the Palestinians never stopped, not for one second. It was ongoing before Hamas victory and after, before the formation of the government and after, with Palestinian operation and without, with Hamas' moderation and without. This war is designed to wipe out the 'theory of the Palestinian partner' and it is aimed at nurturing the Israeli unilateral plan and making it the sole option on the negotiating tables of the region and the world. Most of all, it is an extension of the 'mentality of massacres' in the Zionist political and security thought."

-- "Resistance, not terrorism"

Columnist Basem Sakijha writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (06/28): "One Israeli soldier is kidnapped and the world goes up in arms. On the other hand, an entire country is abducted, its people are killed and imprisoned and starved, and no one says a word. The French Israeli [soldier] was not kidnapped from Tel Aviv or any part of the so-called Israel, but from the Gaza Strip, which is acknowledged by one and all as an occupied territory. He is a soldier who was in his military barracks, not at a restaurant or home. Yet, the image portrayed by the western media and unfortunately some Arab media is that this is a terrorist action and a departure from the agreements, despite the fact that all charters acknowledge the right those under occupation to resist the occupation. Turning facts upside down is prevalent in this world when it comes to Israel.... It is as if the requirement is to keep silent about all the injustice."

RUBINSTEIN